DIALOGUE BETWEEN CINEMA AND NOVEL: THE CASE OF *CASABLANCA* AND *EL INVIERNO EN LISBOA*

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Although Antonio Muñoz Molina's 1987 novel *El invierno en Lisboa* has won both the «Premio de la crítica» and the «Premio nacional de literatura», major aspects of the novel have yet to be studied. A review of what has been written about *El invierno en Lisboa* reveals that Andrés Soria Olmedo has seen it as a type of American mystery novel with the structure of the *Bildungsroman* or *Erziehungsroman* (110), and has highlighted Muñoz Molina's «fervor» concerning the possibilities of using art for moral illumination combined with his skillful use of the most appropriate media for transmitting his message (111). Related criticism includes several interviews with the author, such as those by Marie-Lise Gazarian Gauthier, Javier Escudero and Elizabeth Scarlett. Gonzalo Navajas and Randolph Pope have been primarily concerned with demonstrating how *El invierno en Lisboa* is a paradigm of the postmodern novel, however they dedicate limited space to the role of *Casablanca* in the novel, leaving room for further exploration of topic. Pope's article devotes a sentence to note this influence (114) and the article by Navajas includes two paragraphs which cite one of the explicit references to *Casablanca* and assert that Santiago Biralbo and Humphrey Bogart are doubles (224).

It is not within the scope of this paper to prove that *El invierno en Lisboa* is a postmodern work nor to define postmodernism. Postmodernism is too complex, and the lack of critical consensus

on its meaning as well as the space allotted here prohibit such an undertaking. Both the articles of Gonzalo Navajas and Randolph Pope confirm that the novel can be considered a postmodern work. This characterization of *El invierno en Lisboa* is attested to by Muñoz Molina himself in his interview with Elizabeth Scarlett (75).

The use of cinema or other elements of mass culture in narrative is not entirely new to postmodernism. What is newer is to have a book in which one movie plays such a large part of the intertextual dialogue, as is the case in *El invierno en Lisboa*. Because this one film is so predominant throughout the novel, readers may well ask themselves what the relationship is between the two: is the dialogue ironic or merely elegiac, and are the lines spoken in *El invierno en Lisboa* those of the film or those made famous in popular culture, such as «Play it again, Sam»? On one level, by writing a story with such an obvious debt to the film, Muñoz Molina is paying homage to *Casablanca*, and this homage goes deeper than its role as an element of popular culture, because there are many similarities between his novel and the film which have not been picked up by popular culture. On another level, however, Muñoz Molina is not repeating, but rather reinterpreting a popular myth. It seems almost as if various elements of *Casablanca* had been introduced into a kaleidoscope which had then been turned, causing them to fall into new combinations, as elements of reality are apt to do in the unconscious realm. By examining the intertextual dialogue we see, not so much an homage or even a subtle critique of the movie, but rather a mutual interrogation in which *Casablanca*'s fundamental presuppositions regarding what is morally acceptable are underscored, when compared to the absence of moral absolutes in Muñoz Molina's novel.

The loss of moral absolutes is one of the characteristics of postmodernism which is most present in *El invierno en Lisboa*. *Casablanca* is a morally complex film, as shown by the corrupt French office who is capable of an act of heroic complicity, however it does not question the basic value of the ideals of patriotism, fidelity within marriage, and self-sacrifice. Muñoz Molina, while incorporating many elements of *Casablanca* into his novel, highlights the absence of these ideals in the postmodern world. As Gonzalo Navajas relates, «El postmodernismo en estética y la posmodernidad como paradigma cultural general de nuestro mo-

mento rechazan la investigación de configuraciones de la verdad y el valor (*aletheia* y *ethos*) como una empresa ingenua o deshonesta que oculta sospechosos motivos no confesados» (226). Randolph Pope expresses a similar idea in his article «Postmodernismo en España: El caso de Antonio Muñoz Molina» where he asserts as proof that Spain has fully entered the world of postmodernism «el abandono de... la ideología [y]... la transgresión lúdica de los límites tradicionales,genéricos, sexuales, in its literature (119). Gonzalo Navajas also discusses this elimination of moral absolutes in the novel: «la superación de los límites de la moral tenía como propósito en Nietzche la creación de un modelo de sujeto más genuino, excelente. En la versión posmoderna, la eliminación de los determinantes morales...» is not meant to create superhuman, but rather its inverse. Lucretia, for example, is a «reversión de un arquetipo superior» (Navajas 219). This superior arquetype is that of Ilsa in *Casablanca*: self-sacrificing, in love with her husband, willing to give all to save another. Ilsa did not know her husband, was alive when she met Rick. Lucrecia willingly cheated on the husband stole the Cézanne painting for her own gain, and «es cómplice en un asesinato y tiene tratos con figuras abiertamente criminales de las que procura obtener ventajas» (Navajas 219). Ilsa's companion, while he may find himself on the wrong side of the enemy Nazi law, is portrayed as a noble, valiant patriotic and truly heroic figure, whereas none of these adjectives could possibly be used to describe Lucrecia's husband or any for their consorts. In *Casablanca* to have an affair with Ilsa would clearly be wrong, yet in *El invierno en Lisboa* the extramarital relationship between Biralbo and Lucretia is not condemned.

As Linda Hutcheon explains, postmodernist rethinking «is always a critical reworking, never a nostalgic return» (4). Such is the case in the dialogue between *Casablanca* and *El invierno en Lisboa*. Although the reader may intuit a fondness for the film due to the way its presence is handled, there can be no nostalgic return: the world has changed a great deal since World War II and the resulting differences between these two stories highlight the varying perceptions of moral absolutes or the lack thereof now that forty years have passed.

Elements of *Casablanca* which have been introduced into the kaleidoscope of *El invierno en Lisboa* include both explicit textual references to *Casablanca* as well as other less obvious common

elements, including the use of cinematic techniques in the narrative, especially those pertaining to *film noir*.

Even before the name «*Casablanca*» is mentioned in *El invierno en Lisboa*, the alert reader will notice the explicit references made by the narrator to the world of cinema. In Chapter four, the nameless first person narrator tells us how he spoke to Santiago Biralbo, the protagonist «con acotaciones de ironía» (30)[1]. By using the term «acotaciones» he calls our attention to the fact that he sees his narration as a script. This perception is reinforced at the end of the same chapter, when the lovers Lucrecia and Biralbo say goodbye. Lucrecia makes a comment about the rain and Biralbo answers, «así llueve siempre en las películas cuando la gente va a despedirse» (Muñoz Molina 38).

In chapter five, the comparison of Biralbo to an actor is more closely defined when the narrator relays to us Biralbo's wish: «Decía que... aspiraba a ser como esos héroes de las películas cuya biografía comienza al mismo tiempo que la acción y no tienen pasado, sino imperiosos atributos» (Muñoz Molina 40). We discover on page 141 that this actor is Humphrey Bogart from *Casablanca*. Biralbo also wears the type of hat worn by supporting actors in old movies (Muñoz Molina 46). It is ironic, however, that this wish of Biralbo's is exactly the opposite of the only possibility he has both as a character and as a narrator, for the entire novel is a recounting of his history.

In Chapter XIV, during one of the most dramatic moments of the novel, Lucrecia's husband explains that the two of them left Spain because he did not want Lucrecia to fall in love with Biralbo. Although both Ilsa and Lucrecia may love their lovers more

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[1] This idea of the recombination of real elements to produce the surreal, when examined after the preceding quote from *El invierno en Lisboa*, brings the reader to one of the key factors in this novel: the postmodern doubt that one can know the truth about anything. Reality was not enough for Lucrecia and Biralbo: They had to turn to cinema, books and music, and by doing so were really talking about themselves. The author exist in the same world as Biralbo and Lucrecia, and indeed affirms that when he writes his books are filters through which he shares his own reality. When asked how he came up with these two characters, Antonio Muñoz Molina replied:

> At the beginning of Montaigne's essays, he issues a little warning to the reader that runs as follows: «Reader, the only subject of my book is me». So, I come up with my characters in daily life, in movies, and, above all, in myself. (Gazarian Gauthier 221)

than their husbands, the flight from Spain by Lucrecia and her husband Bruce Malcolm presents a marked contrast to the scene where Ilsa voluntarily stays in Paris to be with her husband. Malcolm offers as one of the principal reasons for the flight the fear that Lucrecia and Biralbo will fall in love, based on the fact that they had seen all the (same) movies and knew all the actors, and asserts that Lucrecia left him because he had not seen the films and did not know the actors (Muñoz Molina 132-33).

The culminating references to cinema, the quotes from *Casablanca* itself, are intimately related to the above passage. When Lucrecia and Biralbo are reunited after her three-year absence, Lucrecia asks Biralbo to take her back to the bar where Biralbo played the piano. The narrator explains, «Porque habían nacido para fugitivos amaron siempre las películas, la música, las ciudades extranjeras» (Muñoz Molina 80). He alerts the reader that not only are Rick and Biralbo doubles, as Navajas has noted, but that Sam and Biralbo are doubles as well. We discover this because a few lines below the narrator's comment that they loved film, cited above, Lucrecia initiates the following dialogue:

> «—Tócala otra vez. Tócala otra vez para mí. / —Sam —dijo él, calculando la risa y la complicidad—. Santiago Biralbo» (Muñoz Molina 80, emphasis added). Here Antonio Muñoz Molina has intentionally borrowed elements from *Casablanca*. The first of these is the parallelism between the black jazz piano players. The name Sam, that of the pianist from *Casablanca*, is repeated and incorporated into a play on words revolving around the name Santiago, which here refers to the pianist from *El invierno en Lisboa*. Muñoz Molina has thus united *Casablanca* with Spanish tradition because Santiago, the name of his protagonist and of the patron saint of Spain, is phonetically very similar to the name Sam. This passage directly mimics the scene from *Casablanca* in which Ilsa asks Sam to «Play it again, Sam, for old time's sake» as well as the one in which Rick asks Sam to play the song for him: «You played it for her and you can play it for me... If she can stand it, I can. Play it!» (Koch 96, 110).

The second explicit reference to *Casablanca* occurs in Chapter XIV of *El invierno en Lisboa*. Lucrecia's husband, Bruce Malcolm, is an art smuggler, and believes that Biralbo knows the location of a valuable painting. Malcolm's partner, Toussants Morton, and Morton's secretary, Daphne, are interrogating Biralbo as to the

painting's whereabouts. When Morton, frustrated by not receiving the response he desired, finally says «habla ahora mismo o te mato» (Muñoz Molina 140), Biralbo's response was the same as that of Rick's in *Casablanca*, «Go ahead and shoot. You'll be doing me a favor» (Koch 191). («Dispara... Me harías un favor» (Muñoz Molina 140). Toussants Morton asks where he has heard that before, and Daphne answers, «En *Casablanca*... Bogart se lo dice a Ingrid Bergman» (Muñoz Molina 141).

The difference here consists of the fact that Ilsa was going to shoot Rick, the man she truly loved, to save her husband and help him advance his patriotic cause, whereas Morton is a thug, willing to shoot Biralbo for his own material gain.

The reference to *Casablanca* has a tremendous negative effect on Lucrecia's husband:

> Al oír eso una transfiguración sucedió en el rostro de Malcolm. Miró a Daphne, olvidó que tenía la pistola en la mano, la verdadera rabia y la verdadera crueldad contrajeron su boca e hicieron más pequeños sus ojos cuando volvió a fijarlos en Biralbo y se lanzó sobre él.
> —Películas —dijo, pero era muy difícil entender sus palabras—. Eso es lo único que os importaba, ¿verdad? Despreciabais a quien no las conociera, hablabais de ellas y de vuestros libros y de vuestras canciones pero yo sabía que estabais hablando de vosotros mismos, no os importaba nadie ni nada, la realidad era demasiado pobre para vosotros, ¿no es cierto...? (Muñoz Molina 141)

These explicit references to cinema in *El invierno en Lisboa* draw the reader's attention towards the cinematic techniques used in the narration. Several cinematic techniques are employed both in *Casablanca* and in *El invierno en Lisboa*. The first of these are flashbacks, used in both cases to recount the protagonists' love affairs. In *Casablanca*, the viewer witnesses the flashback to the love affair between Rick and Ilsa in Paris (Koch 110-23). *El invierno en Lisboa* takes this technique a step further, because its basic structure is composed of flashbacks: the novel opens two years after the last time Lucrecia and Biralbo saw each other, and recounts their affair through a series of flashbacks. Another cinematic technique commonly employed by Antonio Muñoz Molina is that of the fade-out, especially at the end of a chapter. These fade-outs leave the reader hanging, anxious to continue reading

and discover the answers to questions raised at the chapters' end. The high level of dramatic tension throughout the novel is maintained in this way, just as the dramatic tension is maintained throughout *Casablanca*. One example of this technique occurs in *El invierno en Lisboa* at the end of the first chapter, where Biralbo is described as looking like the kind of character who would have a story and carry a revolver, and the narrator tempts the reader to continue by asserting, «Pero no estoy haciendo una vana comparación literaria: él tenía una historia y guardaba un revolver» (15). A second example occurs at the end of the second chapter, «No había nada. La última carta de Lucrecia era un sobre vacío» (22). Other cinematic elements exist in *El invierno en Lisboa* which are specifically characteristic of *film noir*.

Film noir is a term used to describe certain films from the 1940's and 1950's which were both literally and figuratively dark, reflecting the disillusion of the post-war period. Shadowy lighting and night scenes, often set in bars, contributed to the dark world in which good and bad had become more relative. This genre highlighted antiheroes facing a hostile world and unobtainable femme fatales, and often involved the pursuit of some characters by others[2]. Elements of *film noir* existing in *Casablanca* have been incorporated into *El invierno en Lisboa* albeit combined in different fashions . They include: (a) the setting and atmosphere; (b) the antihero facing a hostile world; (c) the pursuit of some characters by others; and (d) a beautiful and inaccessible woman, desired by the protagonist but unavailable to him. Each of these elements has been altered in the intertextual dialogue between the movie and the novel.

First, the setting and atmosphere of the two works is similar. The action in both *El invierno en Lisboa* and *Casablanca* takes place frequently in bars, where people of all nationalities meet to transact business. Both involve a secret underworld of smugglers. Such are the similarities, but just as Hutcheon has said that the postmodern «signals the difference in the very heart of similarity» (26), in *Casablanca* the smugglers are trading exit visas and letters of transit which are used to save lives and in *El invierno en Lisboa* they trade works of art, purely for financial gain, and will

[2] For a more complete definition of *film noir*, see Jameson, 1-48 and López, 18-19 or for a more brief analysis, see the abbreviated definition of «film noir" in *Benét's Reader's Enciclopedia*.

kill for monetary advantage, thus in the novel this particular similarity/difference comments on materialism vs. idealism.

An atmosphere of danger prevails in both cases, and early in each work the reader or viewer is alerted to the potential peril. In the first chapter of *El invierno en Lisboa* the reader is told that Biralbo carries a revolver, and in one of the first scenes of *Casablanca* the viewer both witnesses a shooting and hears the English tourists being warned: «watch yourself. Be on guard. This place is full of vultures, vultures everywhere, everywhere» (Muñoz Molina 15, Koch 29 - 30). The cause of the danger is quite different, however. *Casablanca* takes place during World Ward II, an unavoidably dangerous time when the people in greatest danger are those who are fighting for what they believe is right. In *El invierno en Lisboa* on the other hand, the danger is caused by the characters' greed and lifestyle choices, as the novel peels back the skin of the art smuggling underworld and shows, both by the murder of «el portugués» and the killing of Malcolm, that it teems with equally threatening characters and situations (Muñoz Molina 153, 164).

The sense of danger is highlighted in both works by the pursuit of some of the characters by others. In *El invierno en Lisboa* Morton and Malcolm first hunt Lucrecia, then Biralbo, in their search for the painting which Lucrecia had stolen. In *Casablanca*, Captain Renault and Major Strasser pursue first Ugarte, then Rick, for the letters of transit. In the course of the pursuit, characters in both the film and the novel travel from country to country, however Muñoz Molina contrasts his novel with *Casablanca* here because the characters in *El invierno en Lisboa* travel not as much to save their lives as to engage in their criminal lifestyle. The characters in the novel are not strongly linked to one certain country and the fight for its destiny. Unlike the characters of *Casablanca*, who emigrate only due to political upheaval, the novelistic characters live in Spain, Germany or Portugal as they wish, without showing any patriotic preference.

The characters of both works also fit *film noir* patterns in other ways. First, the antihero of *film noir* is confronted with a hostile world. Neither Rick nor Biralbo are portrayed as knights in shining armor (although both will sacrifice for the woman they love at the end). Both inhabit, not a castle of Camelot, but the world of nightclubs filled with foreign smugglers, and have cho-

sen this world of their own free will. This choice, combined with the fact that Rick looks out for his own interests: «I stick my neck out for nobody» (Koch 72) and the fact that Biralbo has been knowingly involved in an adulterous relationship, establish them as antiheroes. Both become cynical as a result of their failed affairs, although for Rick this condition is not permanent. Rick undergoes two transformations in *Casablanca*: he begins as a man in love and becomes a cynic when he feels betrayed by Ilsa; he then is transformed into an idealist in love, but without his beloved. In Muñoz Molina's version of the story, the antihero is transformed merely from «man in love» to hardened cynic; no idealism is thrown into the equation. We do not know whether or not he will remain in this condition however, because only two years have passed since he last saw Lucrecia, and previously she had reappeared after three years. The reader of this postmodern work is thus left to choose between either: (a) the reality of Biralbo and Lucrecia's separation and the continuing cynicism of Biralbo/Dolphin or (b) the fantasy of the readers' own imagined conclusion[3].

Another character typical to *film noir* which appears in both works is the beautiful, inaccessible woman. Where as Ilsa is the typical beauty of *film noir*, who is seen as an object which exists to support the protagonist/subject, Lucrecia is the inversion of the archetype: She is still beautiful and inaccessible (the similarity) yet does not exist only to support a male protagonist. She takes her life into her own hands by stealing the Cézanne painting and running away from her murderous husband. She is just as much

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[3] The interview conducted by Marie-Lise Gazarian Gauthier contains an interesting comment by the author related precisely to this ending:

MLG: In *El invierno en Lisboa*, for instance, you end the story without telling us what happened to Lucrecia and Biralbo. We could almost go on with the story ourselves to find out what really took place.

AMM: I could tell you an anecdote precisely related to that. Many people write me letters in which they tell me about my characters; what they have done without realizing it is continue my own novel. Recently I received a postcard from Portugal from someone who said he had seen Biralbo and Lucrecia in Lisbon.

MLG: What was your reaction to that?

AMM: I enjoyed it and thought it amusing. It has made me face the fact that once the novel is out it is no longer what I wrote, and it is no longer mine. It takes on new dimensions and belongs to the readers.

MLG: Can you tell me where Lucrecia and Biralbo are now?

AMM: I don't know, I really don't know. (220)

of a character in *El invierno en Lisboa* as Biralbo, and the novel is almost as much her story as it is his.

Apart from the characteristics of *film noir*, there are many other similarities between *El invierno en Lisboa* and *Casablanca* that lend greater resonance to the counterpoint between the two. These include stories involving antiheroes who fall in love with, and lose, married women; the title of each work referring to a city; and specific cities playing a key role in each. The cities of Casablanca and Paris are important elements in setting the stage for the movie, just as the cities of San Sebastián, Lisbon, and Madrid play an important role in setting the stage for *El invierno en Lisboa*; Germany is also present in both works, as the place (or influence) from which the protagonist' love interests are escaping.

The theme of escape is present in both works when a musician tells the protagonist of each to escape with him and forget about his beloved. Billy Swann, the trumpet player, urges Biralbo several times to leave on tour with him. Sam urges Rick to leave as well, but both refuse because they are waiting for their beloved to return, as we see in *Casablanca*:

> «SAM/Boss, let's get out of here. /RICK/ *Emphatically* / No, sir. I'm waiting for a lady» (Koch 108).

Jazz music is another common element. Although it is not the theme song which most viewers most remember, the lyrics of a song which Sam sings in *Casablanca*: «It had to be you», bear some resemblance to the song Biralbo sings to Lucrecia: «Everything you are» (Koch 110, Muñoz Molina 26). In addition, both works have a black jazz pianist who plays in a bar where expatriates meet, although with the kaleidoscopic reorganization of *El invierno en Lisboa* the jazz musician of the novel is also the antihero/protagonist.

Additional themes in *Casablanca* and *El invierno en Lisboa* include memories and the passage of time. The epigraph from Flaubert that precedes the body of *El invierno en Lisboa* links both works: «Existe un momento en las separaciones en el que la persona amada ya no está con nosotros». On the one hand, this summarizes the principal idea of the novel, a story of love and memories; and on the other, it bears a striking resemblance both to the plot of *Casablanca* in which Ilsa leaves forever, and to the theme song of the film. The theme song deals both with the passage of

time, as seen by its title, «As time goes by», and with memory, as shown by the words most often quoted from it, «You must remember this...»

Other key factors in both works are the nonverbal cues which the characters give each other, such as the gaze and the smile. In both works the intensity or the love felt by the protagonist for the leading lady is marked by the way he looks at her and vice versa. Lucrecia exchanges meaningful glances with Biralbo who, due to the kaleidoscopic reorganization of Antonio Muñoz Molina, is the double of two of the men with whom Ilsa exchanges meaningful glances in *Casablanca*: the black pianist, Sam, and her love interest, Rick.

Just as the gaze reveals the true sentiments of the characters, so also does the smile. The presence of the true versus the insincere smile reveals the feelings of the person smiling towards the recipient of this expression. In *El invierno en Lisboa*, we find Lucrecia, who smiled a real smile when she first saw Biralbo, though she did not dare smile with her lips (because her husband was with her): «advertí la sonrisa que iluminó las pupilas de Lucrecia sin llegar a sus labios» (26). On the other hand, Daphne, the traitorous secretary, smiles insincerely at Biralbo: «le sonrió a Biralbo, únicamente con los labios» (57). Daphne's smile was fake, serving as both a warning to the reader and a foreshadowing; for she later had no opposition to Biralbo being killed. As the narrator notes Daphne's insincere smile in *El invierno en Lisboa*, so Major Sstrasser looks at Captain Renault in *Casablanca*, «but sees only a noncommittal smile on Renault's face» (Koch 90).

Letters play an important role in both works as well. The moment in which Rick reads the letter he receives from Ilsa at the train station, his last contact with her before she arrives in *Casablanca*, is one of the most poignant in the film. Likewise, the letters from Lucrecia in *El invierno en Lisboa* are vital to the novel, and the point at which they cease to arrive is crushing to Biralbo. The last letter from Lucrecia is a map of Lisbon. This fact refers the reader back to *Casablanca*, because Lisbon was the destination of the refugees of the film who were seeking to escape to America, and a map of the refugee trail is the opening scene of the movie. In a similar fashion, Lucrecia has followed her own refugee trail to Lisbon. The map of Lisbon which Lucrecia sends to Biralbo represents her escape: by finding the painting, Lucrecia

will become financially independent and will escape from the oppressive relationship with her murderously jealous husband.

Another parallel between the film and the novel are the scenes in train stations. When Rick receives the letter from Ilsa saying that she cannot accompany him in his escape from Paris, he is so stunned that Sam must pull him onto the already moving train. In a corresponding moment, Biralbo sees Lucrecia as his train is at the station, but is unable to reach her because his own train is already departing (118). Both scenes have the sense of agony induced by the idea that if the train were not leaving in that precise instant perhaps the protagonist would be able to reach his beloved and be reunited with her. In addition to being a literal parallel of the *Casablanca* scene, both train scenes could be seen to represent, metaphorically, the train of events which will not permit the lovers to remain together, and which has already been set into motion (Koch 121-23, Muñoz Molina 118).

We have seen some elements which serve to establish the counterpoint between *Casablanca* and *El invierno en Lisboa*. Other elements exist which are introduced into the novel to further enrich the dialogue between the two. One of these is the picture of the elusive woman disappearing into the mist. During *El invierno en Lisboa*, each time Lucrecia and Biralbo separate it is raining or misty; Ilsa and her husband take off into the mist at the end of the movie; and Lucrecia disappears into the mist at the end of *El invierno en Lisboa*. Related to this are scenes of leave-taking in the rain. Just as Lucrecia and Biralbo always separate in the rain, when Rick is at the train station and must leave Ilsa, it is raining as well. The difference here is that, while both women are going to their husbands, neither Ilsa nor Rick ever knew that their relationship was an adulterous one while they were engaged in it, whereas Biralbo and Lucrecia did. In addition the image of a plane to Lisbon is used in both works. A different result is produced in each case, however, because the protagonist of *El invierno en Lisboa* ends up on one of these planes, going to search for an adulterous relationship with his beloved, unlike Rick, who encourages his beloved at the last minute to leave him for her husband (Muñoz Molina 111, Koch 31-32, 227). Despite all the similarities between the two works, they stand distinct and side by side, and the difference in the plane to Lisbon underscores this notion because it draws attention to the relative lack of self-sacrifice in *El invierno en Lisboa*.

The spirit of sacrifice present in *Casablanca* is, according to Umberto Eco, one of the reasons the movie has obtained cult status:

> The idea of sacrifice pervades the whole story, Ilsa's sacrifice in Paris when she abandons the man she loves to return to the wounded hero, the Bulgarian bride's sacrifice when she is prepared to give herself to help her husband, Victor's sacrifice when he is prepared to see Ilsa with Rick to guarantee her safety (262).

In addition to the sacrifices mentioned by Eco, the viewer will note Rick's sacrifices in letting Ilsa leave with her husband, despite his love for her, and Victor Laszlo's sacrifices for his cause. The extremely limited scope of self-sacrifice in *El invierno en Lisboa*, does not entail sacrifice to a higher ideal, unlike the sacrifices of Rick, Victor and Ilsa in *Casablanca*. These sporadic sacrifices in the novel include Floro Boom loaning his car to Biralbo to escape with the married Lucrecia (97); and Lucrecia and Biralbo deciding not to see the other, (each one instigates this decision at a separate point near the end of the novel, for the well-being of the other) (Muñoz Molina 148, 158).

A final difference between *El invierno en Lisboa* and *Casablanca* is the confusion between the real and the unreal which exists in the novel. Biralbo looks into the mirror on several occasions and it is as if he is looking at somebody else, and the world «irreal» is a leitmotif of the text. The most stunning example of this trait, however, is related to a cognate characteristic: the move away from closed narrative and towards the open ending. Throughout *Casablanca*, we never doubt that the characters are supposed to be «real», and when we reach the end of the movie, we know the ending: Ilsa has left with her husband, and Rick and Renault are off to fight for their ideals. In *El invierno en Lisboa* on the other hand, we do not know whether or not Biralbo and Lucrecia will ever reunite. Indeed, the final sentence of the novel leaves us doubting their very existence: Biralbo had disappeared having given up hope of ever seeing Lucrecia again, when she appeared at his apartment. The narrator tells her that she has just missed him, and she leaves. As she goes, the narrator watches her disappear through the window, her image erased as if it had never existed:

> Tras los cristales del balcón la vi aparecer en la acera, de espaldas, un poco inclinada, con la gabardina blanca extendida por el viento frío de diciembre, reluciente de lluvia bajo las luces azules del hotel. Reconocí su manera de andar mientras cruzaba la calle, ya convertida en una lejana mancha blanca entre la multitud, perdida en ella, invisible, súbitamente borrada tras los paraguas abiertos y los automóviles, como si nunca hubiera existido (Muñoz Molina 187).

The magical way in which Lucrecia has disappeared at the end of *El invierno en Lisboa*, «erased as if she had never existed» (187), is similar to Laszlo and Ilsa flying off through the mist in an airplane at the conclusion of *Casablanca*, but goes much further by blurring the line between reality and illusion.

In conclusion, we see the intertextual dialogue, and the postmodern «repetition with critical distance that allows ironic signaling of difference at the very heart of similarity» (Hutcheon 26) in the relationship between *Casablanca* and *El invierno en Lisboa* by such similarities as Muñoz Molina comparing his narrative to a script, and the many elements appearing in *El invierno en Lisboa* which appeared previously in *Casablanca*. The use of these elements is far from being a mere imitation, however: in trying to resolve the experience of losing his love interest, this postmodern author has introduced elements of *Casablanca* into his kaleidoscope and the resulting work stands side by side with the original, all the while conveying a highly altered message. In the author's world, retreat back into the idealistic past represented in *Casablanca* is virtually impossible, and the emphasis on the «real» versus the «unreal» is highlighted. The dialogue between the novel and the film seems to underscore the idea that we cannot go back to the moral absolutes of *Casablanca*'s time, and one doubts if Muñoz Molina would even desire that, nor can we now be assured of the most basic facts regarding our life, such as the existence of those we have loved. Instead of having the beautiful woman fly off into the mist with her husband, as any good war-time hero's wife should, she disappears and we are left with an open ending to the story. Thus the more straightforward ending of *Casablanca*, with is idealistic values and its sense of security regarding existence, is questioned by Muñoz Molina. This interrogation forms the basis of his dialogue with *Casablanca*, and is one of the characteristics which moves this novel into the realm of the postmodern age.

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